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HOPKINS'S 'HISTORY OF RELIGIONS.'

The History of Religions. By E. WASHBURN HOPKINS, Ph.D., LL.D., Professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Philology, Yale University. New York: The MACMILLAN COMPANY, 1918. pp. 6 + 624.

THIS new work on the history of religions is part of the 'Religious Science and Literature Series' appearing under the editorship of E. Hershey Sneath, Yale University, which is designed to provide text-books for religious education in colleges and universities. The present manual, accordingly, begins *ab ovo*, that is. in distinction from such works as those of Professors Moore and Barton, which are largely confined to the higher aspects of religion as they found expression among the oriental and classical peoples, Professor Hopkins goes back to the basic elements which underlie religious phenomena from the lowest to the highest, which he discusses in a genetic way. Adopting the figure of a tree for religion, he proposes to 'study the roots and higher growth of this tree, which through its age-long development, as any tree changes its earth-drawn sustenance into something more ethereal, has transmuted terror into reverent awe, hunger into hope, lust into love . . . We shall see in short that the higher not only is above the lower, but that it has ascended out of the lower. Savagery did not give place to civilization, but developed into it, was already civilization in germ' (p. 1).

Next to this comprehensiveness and breadth of view of the author which he shows throughout in his sympathetic, albeit discriminating, estimate of the several religions and their contributions of ethical and spiritual values, may be singled out his independence and critical attitude towards time-honoured shibboleths and assumptions, which will be illustrated in reviewing the chapter on the Religion of Israel.

In two introductory chapters are discussed the preliminary questions of definitions, sources, and classifications of religions, and the general characteristics of primitive religions. Professor Hopkins rejects both naturism and animism as the *prius* of religion, as the abstraction of spirit from body is beyond the grasp of primitive man. 'The object to which his grave mumblings of hope and fear are directed is neither god nor devil, nor a power of any sort as a person; it is rather the potency called *mana* or *orenda*' (p. 18). This potency the primitive man conceives not as one universal power diffused through the universe, but as inherent separately in everything animate and inanimate. To this attitude towards a spiritual world he gives expression through fear, entreaty, by means of dance and spell and memorial stones, which are the 'prototypes of churches'.

The study of the religions of Africa, of the Ainus, Polynesians and America give occasion for the discussion of fetishism, shamanism, taboo, mana and totemism, in all of which the author finds elements of permanent value which have been assimilated by the higher religions. Thus summing up his estimates of these basic elements of primitive religions he says in the Preface: 'Taboo invested with spiritual power the moral command, insured the home, and made for civilization; fetishism confirmed the thought that man depends on a spiritual something, gave faith in a power that helped, and made the power the judge of right and wrong; totemism linked man in communion with the divine and in conjunction with seasonal nature worship founded ritual in the recurrent form necessary to religious stability.' Then follows in succession, Celtic Religion; Religion of the Slavic Peoples; Religion of the Teutons; Religions of India. From the Vedas to Buddha; Buddhism; Hindu Sectarian Religions; Religions of China, Pre-Confucian Religion; Confucius, Tao-tse, Taoism; Religions of Japan, Shintoism and Buddhism; Babylonian and Assyrian Religion; Zoroastrianism; the Religion of Israel; the Religion of Mohammed; Greek Religion; the Religion of the Romans, and the Religion of Christ and Christianity. As has already been noted, the author has a good word for all the

religions, especially the advanced ones which have left literatures based upon religion: 'Zoroaster made religion ethical and spiritual; God is a spirit, not a nature god; God is good' (p. 378). 'Zoroaster is first to make public service a part of religion' (p. 382). 'Mohammed was the logical and historical successor of the old prophets of Israel'! (p. 452). 'The value of Mohammedanism lies in its influence with rude races. As it represented God to the Arabs, so to-day it is an effective means of betterment to those who stand on a low intellectual and ethical level . . . its monotheism stands in pleasing contrast with Hindu polytheism' (p. 481 f.). In the Greek religion he admires the 'union of ethics and metaphysics into a religion based not on superstition but on philosophy, not on faith but on logic, yet in which due place was given to emotion' (p. 514), while in the Roman religion the moral element is pointed out, 'The Roman at all times recognized a supreme directing Power, which was a moral force in his life and in that of the State' (p. 533).

The religion of Israel is discussed from the critical-evolutionistic standpoint, but with many reservations. The author does not even conceal his misgivings that the conclusions of the higher criticism with regard to the divisions of the Old Testament stories into various sections may not be conclusive (p. 428, note 4). While it is 'improbable that David imposed Yahveh on Israel after he had consolidated the Israelites by conquest', 'it seems historically reasonable to believe that Moses . . . united various tribes and made real an ideal not wholly unknown before, in that he gave Israel its jealous protecting national divinity' (p. 418), and 'a pronounced ethical trait is observable in Yahveh worship from the beginning' (p. 415). 'The purely speculative "interpretation" of the patriarchs as tribal heroes, local gods, or even as natural phenomena (this last, however, never deserved consideration), ignores traditional values and, apart from that, remains guess-work . . . We must at least avoid statements too positive and incapable of verification' (p. 418).

'Halaka and Agada' (Haggadah) are not clearly divided between Talmud and Midrash respectively, as might be inferred from

p. 447. There are large portions of Haggadah in the Talmud, in the Babylonian Talmud, which is the authoritative, more than one-third of its contents, and in the Palestinian or Jerusalem Talmud about one-sixteenth, and on the other hand, there are halakik Midrashim, as the Sifre, Sifra and Mekilta. Abraham Ibn Ezra is famous as a commentator of the Bible, but he has not composed a commentary on the Talmud. Nor does it seem quite accurate to designate Solomon Bar Isaac (Rashi) or any other Rabbi as special carrier-on of the chain of tradition (p. 448). Since the conclusion of the Talmud the Jewish community as a whole is the depositary of the Tradition. 'Hannukah or Chanuka is now interpreted as a feast of enlightenment' (p. 450). What is here meant by 'enlightenment', and who is the authority for this interpretation?

The few misprints noticed, p. 48, n. 1, for *latrio* *read* *latria*; p. 80 Xoonon, *read* Xoanon; p. 238, n. 2 aqas, *read* aquas; p. 318 an, *read* at; p. 348 Ninevah (*bis*), *read* Nineveh; p. 359, Ps. vi, 63, strike the 3; p. 446, n. 1 Dorsitheans, *read* Dositheans; p. 448 Tanaim, *read* Tannaim; p. 471, n. 1, 'halaika, *read* 'alaika, and effected, *read* affected.

Professor Hopkins's work is a valuable contribution to the literature on comparative religion. It is a good *repertorium* of sifted facts and well-considered interpretations of them for the serious scientific study of the religious phenomena.

There are short bibliographies at the close of each chapter and a satisfactory index.

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